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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT TALKS, U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: The four agreements signed between Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) Chairman P.K. Chiang and China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) Chairman Chen Yunlin Tuesday concerning the three links across the Taiwan Strait received extensive coverage in Taiwan November 5. In addition, news coverage also focused on the U.S. presidential election; on the detention of former Presidential Office Deputy Secretary-General Ma Yung-cheng Tuesday for allegedly assisting former President Chen Shui-bian in embezzling from the state affairs fund; and on the various demonstrations staged by the DPP against the SEF-ARATS meetings.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" lambasted the agreements signed between SEF and ARATS, calling them a letter of intent for the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party to "co-manage Taiwan." An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" said "the core significance of the KMT-CCP reconciliation" was to form "an alliance against Taiwan's democracy, independence and the welfare" of the Taiwan people. An editorial in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times," by contrast, urged the public to applaud the Ma Administration for its efforts in facilitating the three links across the Taiwan Strait. An editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" also hailed the beginning of the "three links era" across the Taiwan Strait. An op-ed piece in the pro-unification "United Daily News," on the other hand, discussed Washington's offer to resume exchange of visits by ministerial-level trade and economic officials between the United States and Taiwan. The article cautioned the Taiwan government to watch out for tangible and intangible pressure behind such a diplomatic gift offered by the United States. End summary.

¶3. Cross-Strait Talks

A) "Dictatorship, a Written Contract by Which One Sells Oneself!"

The "Free Talk" column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 700,000] wrote (11/5):

"[Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation Chairman] P.K. Chiang and [China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait Chairman] Chen Yunlin signed four agreements Tuesday. But judging from the hidden political intent of the Chinese authorities and the Ma Ying-jeou Administration, it was akin to signing a letter of intent for 'the KMT-CCP dictatorship to co-manage Taiwan.' Both sides claimed that this is a big step in the history of cross-Strait relations, but in reality, it is a stride compelling Taiwan to move towards 'ultimate unification' [with China]!"

"What concealed behind the four agreements signed between Chiang and Chen is the 'one China common market,' which will box Taiwan in the one China framework and make it move from 'economically one China' to 'politically one China' in the future. Taiwan will confront the crisis of being annexed by China, and its future destiny is quite worrisome. ..."

B) "The Political Meanings of the Taiwan-PRC Talks"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (11/5):

"... However, the results of the People's Republic of China's chief cross-strait negotiator and the actual Chiang-Chen talks have fallen far short of a 'win-win,' unless we are referring only to the KMT and the PRC's ruling Chinese Communist Party and their associated business interests and sycophants. ... The exposure of the core significance of the KMT-CCP reconciliation as an alliance against Taiwan's democracy, independence and the welfare of the majority of our 23 million people is the most important political significance of the visit by PRC envoy, or should we say, 'governor general' Chen Yun-lin."

C) "View the Four Agreements Reached at the Chiang-Chen Meeting with a Positive Attitude"

The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 220,000] editorialized (11/5):

"... When running for the presidency, President Ma Ying-jeou proposed that he would complete the three links across the Taiwan Strait in two years. At this moment when the international financial tsunami is bringing about an economic downturn in Taiwan, and most people are severely criticizing Ma for failing to keep his campaign promises, [we] must give the Ma Administration applause to affirm [his efforts], particularly given the highly sensitive state of cross-Strait issues. When political differences across the Taiwan Strait remain deadlocked and the ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan have diverged widely in their views [on many issues], using matters concerning the people's livelihood and

economy as the theme for cross-Strait policy is the only way to serve the interests of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. This is a position to which the Ma Administration must stick. ..."

D) "'Three Links' Realized at Last"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (11/5):

"... After a break lasting nearly 59 years, both sides of the Taiwan Strait have finally agreed to resume regularized direct bilateral aviation, shipping and postal links. ... While the 'three links' will begin to be restored in 40 days' time, our government remains able to cut them off in the event that Beijing engages in hostile acts against us. Yesterday's agreement did not make any concessions regarding the issue of the Republic of China's sovereignty. It also did not grant Beijing any degree of control over our airspace, territorial waters or postal operations system. Instead, both sides were careful to avoid using terms in the agreement referring to sensitive political issues so that substantive results could be achieved. While we are glad to see the 'three links' era begin, we also hope that both sides will continue maintaining the current spirit of pragmatism so that even more mutually beneficial arrangements can be achieved in the near future."

14. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

"Watch out for the United States' Big Gift!"

Huang Kwei-bo, Fulbright Visiting Scholars, The Johns Hopkins University, opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (11/5):

"With the atmosphere across the Taiwan Strait turning less tense, even the U.S. government has formally told (or in reality, instructed) [Taiwan] via AIT that the exchange of visits by ministerial-level economic and trade officials [between the two sides] can be resumed. This is, without a doubt, good news, in terms of advancing the contact level between the two governments. But judging from the contents of the trade and economic interactions and talks between Taiwan and the United States, perhaps we need to be more careful. ... It is not because Washington is going to adjust its cross-Strait policy, and certainly not because it wants to

contain or deal a blow to Beijing that the United States is willing to enhance the level of economic interactions with Taiwan.

"As a matter of fact, the United States has not slowed down its pace in demanding that other countries, particularly those 'small and weak allies' (such as Taiwan), lift their ban on the U.S. products, because of its domestic problems mentioned above. The United States has never loosened its grip on issues that concern it most, such as livestock products, intellectual property rights, and so on, and both the previous and incumbent Taiwan administrations have been under great pressure [because of this].

"If certain restrictions on the visits to Taiwan by U.S. cabinet-level economic or trade officials were to be removed, it will be akin to giving the Taiwan government a diplomatic gift. But behind such a gift there is pressure, both tangible and intangible; if our government, [under great pressure,] makes a mistake (or fails to stick to our ground) during the negotiations, all the Taiwan people will have to pay. Tangible pressure, for example, refers to instances such as how relevant Taiwan officials are going to say 'no' while not offending the United States when a U.S. cabinet-level official visits Taiwan. Intangible pressure, on the other hand, refers to cases such as when Washington sends a ministerial-level to Taiwan, and the Taiwan government surely has to show him/her some favors and gives him/her some [good] results that s/he can bring back [to the United States]. Will such 'results' be like following the U.S. demand to minimize our concerns about mad-cow disease and open our market to U.S. beef without any limits? Finally the U.S. cabinet-level economic and trade officials are allowed to visit Taiwan. But the impact that this good news will generate on Taiwan's economic and trade benefits and on our economic policy toward the United States is really something that the Taiwan people as a whole must study carefully and supervise all the time."

YOUNG